



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A LOAN EXHIBITION

NOTES ON PORTRAITS BY ITALIAN MASTERS RARELY SEEN HERE

By CARROLL BECKWITH

FEW if any exhibitions of paintings are more popular in the eyes of the general public than exhibitions of portraits—as well as in those of the connoisseur. New York still recalls the great interest that was shown a decade ago, when the two famous portrait exhibitions were held in the old Academy of Design at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street. So it was with the one held in Florence during the summer of 1911 under the administration of the city and as a part of the National Festival of United Italy in celebration of its Fiftieth Anniversary. The complete absence of any commercial connection with those exhibitions showed the confidence the Italians have in the drawing power of a purely Fine Arts exhibition.

From the evidence of the crowds in Florence at that moment and the interested multitudes that filled the galleries of the exhibition their confidence proved correct.

It was stated by a certain German newspaper that this *Monstra Italiana* was inspired by dealers and *brocanteurs* desirous of giving a value to a period of art thus far little appreciated among collectors, in order to attract the amateur away from the eighteenth century English and French canvases, which have roused such eager competition in the past decade, and to make a market for the *barocco*. Be this as it may, a wider knowledge among connoisseurs will be beneficial and a careful study of the works displayed at this exhibition might bring to the attention of art lovers many canvases of the highest intrinsic merit, whose value has not been known before, and make known the names of painters whose work will rank with that of the best in other countries at the same period.

Scarcely would one think the rooms of the Palazzo Vecchio appropriate for pictures other than the frescoes on the ceilings and walls, but by a system of radiating screens on either side of large windows many pictures were shown to excellent advantage, while in smaller rooms the walls were covered with stuffs against which pictures were placed, mostly on the eye-line, and hung admirably with large explanatory labels. Also, temporary upright easels were simply made and scattered about the rooms to hold important works. There were in the neighborhood of a thousand

exhibits, all portraits. One might imagine such a collection monotonous and fatiguing; on the contrary, the visitors' interest increased with the study of their character as well as with the art of their rendering. As there is no subject more interesting to man than man, so there the natures and personalities, the costumes and expressions of generations were portrayed on canvas with more or less art but always with an interesting and effective search for individuality.

The exhibition began with the end of the Sixteenth Century and came down to 1861. It was mostly the work of Italian painters, but in a few instances there were Italian subjects by foreign painters. Pictures were borrowed from as far away as Petrograd and Krakau.

Indeed all Europe was called upon to contribute from its public galleries as well as from family collections, and a veritably human history it was! The portrait of Pauline Bonaparte-Borghesé looked exactly like some remote aunt pictured in an antiquated frame on the walls of some colonial home in Massachusetts or Virginia.

That center of the city of Florence, with the overwhelming dignity and medieval character of the Palazzo Vecchio, seemed a singularly appropriate setting—for the earlier portraits in particular. With the Medici portrayed by Sustermans, clad in papal robes or *cinqcento* armor, shown in rooms that were the dwelling-places of the



FIG. 1. "MOTHER AND CHILD"
BY PIER-FRANCESCO CITTADINI

family, there came a retrospect of the past that was deeply absorbing. To see the heroic deeds of these personages frescoed by Vasari and others upon the very walls which the portraits of their descendants were adorning brought the spectator in such close touch with events, that this page of history became vivid indeed in its realism.

To take up the study of the galleries, it were well to begin at the beginning, with the earlier works, and make a few notes as we trace them downward to the most recent. And here let me state my purpose, which is to speak of the works of art aside from those of historic incident. In this I feel justified, as my observation tells me that the works of art which have *lived* owe their value and precious qualities solely to their merits as paintings, without regard to the personages represented. This was

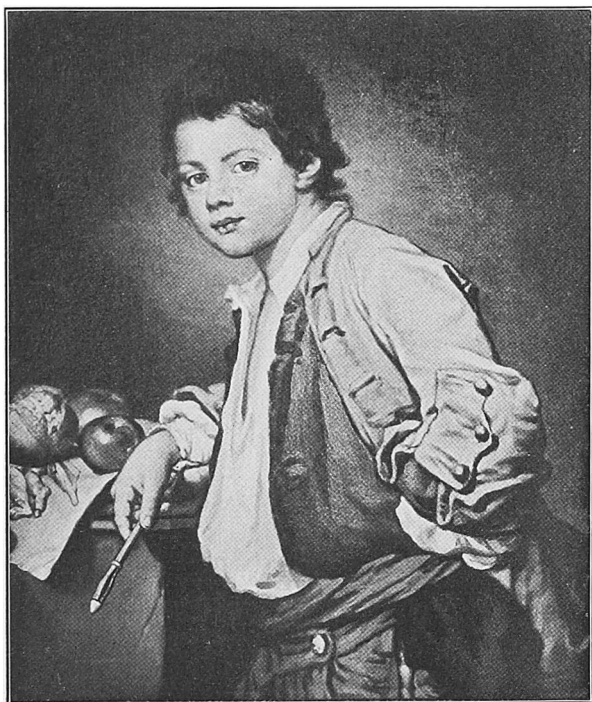


FIG. 2. "PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF WHEN YOUNG"
BY VITTORIO GHISLANDI

happily illustrated in one of the galleries, which was full of Kings and Queens and high dignitaries of state, mostly of the time of Napoleon First.

ROYALTIES BADLY PORTRAYED

How curious it is, that generally the greater the royalty the worse is the art! There may be somewhat in this: the hand of the artist is paralysed by the importance of his task; but I am rather of the opinion that the lack is on the part of the royalties in their selection of their interpreters. There are exceptions, like Philip IV of Spain and Charles I of England, who had the intelligence to have themselves portrayed by Velasquez and Van Dyck, thereby adding to their own glory throughout the centuries. But as a general thing Kings and Queens have been very poorly painted, and in this respect it is interesting to note how greatly they have differed from the Popes, who, with rare exceptions, gathered about the Pontifical See the greatest geniuses of their time.

But geniuses are difficult to manage and not much given to the supple back and the limber knee of homage. I can not but think how Queen Victoria and King Edward might have gone down to posterity with added lustre, had they been portrayed on canvas by the brush of John Sargent—but they missed the opportunity.

Two charcoal drawings on the same sheet of paper were evidently portraits of the artist Annibale Caracci done by himself when a young man.

You recall how three cousins Caracci, assisted by the eminent anatomist Anthony de la Tour, established a famous School of Art in Bologna which was known as the *Incaminata*, or the "Right Road." Here were taught the principles they had learned from the precept and example of Titian, Tintoretto and Correggio. The school of the three Caracci, which was also known at the time as the Eclectic

because it tried to choose and combine the various excellences of the great masters, had a strong influence on the art of the succeeding centuries. The drawing is big in handling, correct in mass and form. We see the flower of the Sixteenth Century as it flourished in that joyous school of Bologna and tumbled its big, foreshortened figures and flopping draperies across half the domes of Northern Italy. But they could draw like masters. Call them the beginners of the decadence if you will; they were the expression of the time, its thought, its atmosphere.

Pier—Francesco Cittadini, born in Milan 1613 (see illustration, Fig. 1). A painter quite unknown to me, but one of the North, a Lombard, and painting with a well-laden brush the characters of both "Mother and Child." The largeness of the hands may be pardoned for the admirable values and rich tonality of the picture together with the character in it.

A Caravaggio "The Lute Player" owned by Prince Liechtenstein of Vienna: canvas about 40 by 50. A lady with her back toward us, in a buff dress with large white sleeves, is admirable in execution and reminds us of a life-size *ter Borch*, only far removed; for the head, with its blonde plaits, looking out at us is bad in drawing and thinly painted. Yet I was told by one in authority that a great American collector had expressed a willingness to pay a vast sum for the canvas if it could be obtained. This was explained, however, by the beautifully fresh condition of the surface of the picture, which had evidently just come from the hands of the restorer!

In the great *Salone di Cinquecento* on the first floor—one of the grandest interiors of all Europe—



FIG. 3. "PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN"
BY VITTORIO GHISLANDI

stood sixteen full-length portraits by Giusto Sustermans, born in Antwerp 1597, a portraitist who lived and died in Italy and spent most of his life in Florence. Each was on a separate easel and represented a member of the Medici family. There were Don Francesco di Cosimo II and Il Cardinale Pamphily. All in splendid armor or rich robes, with backgrounds of landscapes or interiors, enriched in tone by time, mellow and colorful in their flesh-tints as befits a painter from the Netherlands. This entire section came from the Royal Villa at Poggio à Caiano and I believe was never before lent out of the Royal Palace.

STROZZI, A PAINTER LITTLE KNOWN

Several years ago in Venice I was shown a very beautiful portrait of a man painted by Bernardo Strozzi, who was born in Genoa in 1581 where he died in 1644. It was the property of Mr. Curtis, an American gentleman resident in Venice. Afterwards I found some work by this able artist in Genoa. In this Florentine exhibition were gathered eight examples of his brush from the imperial Gallery in Vienna, the Brera in Milan, other public galleries and from private owners. The examples shown were of men. *Un Cavaliere di Malta* indicates his thorough and able treatment of the human head. Drawn and modeled with extreme discretion, abundantly rich in pigment and color, the background and accessories are treated with sobriety. It is only in the hands that fault can be found, as they are empty of form and character and bear the impress of another and less able workman. The lack was not noticed in the other works—a Capuchin, the Doge Francesco Erizzo and a Cardinal, in all of which the hands were ably rendered. His painting resembles very much the work of Tintoretto in his best portraits, yet it is more *serré*, less loose in treatment. Bernardo Strozzi was a portrait painter

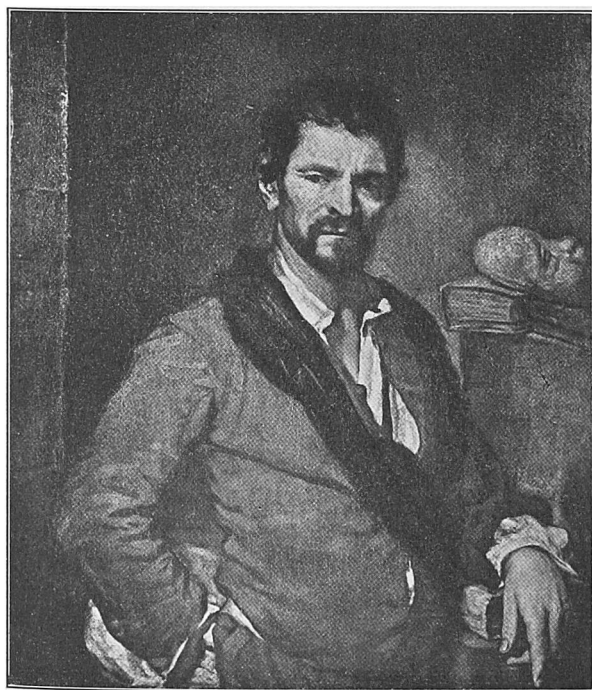


FIG. 4. "FRANCESCO MARIA BRUNTINO"
BY VITTORIO GHISLANDI



FIG. 5. "CATHERINE II OF RUSSIA"
BY GIAN BATTISTA LAMPI

of the very first rank though so little known to amateurs.

Andrea Sacchi—born in Rome 1600, died 1661—Portrait of an Augustinian Friar from the gallery of Strasburg. A beautiful canvas harmonious and exquisite in tone and color quality. The priest in parti-colored robes sits facing one with calm but clear expression. Its technique is able and at the same time devoid of bravura, betraying the highly accomplished workman. I was unable to learn anything of this painter, as was the case with many others whose works were shown. The administration of the exhibition searched the archives and records of Italy in the hope that more information might be obtained and it was their intention to publish a catalogue which would include photographs of the pictures and biographies of the painters. As to Andrea Sacchi he turns out a pupil of Albano with pictures in various churches at Rome, Biblical and classical compositions in Vienna and Madrid—a great man in his day!

There was an entire room given over to the works of Vittorio Ghislandi [Bergamo 1665—1743]. He was also known as Fra Paoletto or Frate da Galgaro from the monastery where he lived near his native home. Twenty-four paintings hung on the walls of this one room. Again the North contributed its genius to the art of Italy. He also was the son of a painter of the Venetian school, Domenico Ghislandi, whose beautiful frescoes are said to have shown accurate knowledge of perspective,—which can be appreciated when one looks aloft in some of the Seventeenth Century churches and sees the complex piling up of arches and columns receding into space with bewildering correctness. It would appear that as art gradually died out in the South during its period of decline the lingering fires



FIG. 6. "COUNT LITTA"
BY GIAN BATTISTA LAMPI

burned brighter on the borders of the Alps. He was a lay-brother in a monastery of Minims (see illustration of portrait of himself, Fig. 2). His method was essentially late Venetian, as was that of the greater part of these able painters. Again character predominates and the abundant pigment is used with skill and exactitude. The "Gentiluomo" (see illustration, Fig. 3) wearing the *tricorne* is dressed in pearl-gray coat and waistcoat of great freshness. The face is handled in rich body-color and glows with warmth and life as if the very blood were flowing under the surface. In this *autoritratto* beside him on the canvas is the head of the "Giovane Artista" which is depicted in the accompanying illustration, "F. M. Bruntino," Fig. 4. The under-waistcoat in this latter exemplifies one of those simple processes of painting much in vogue among the Venetians, viz.: being first prepared in heavy light body-color, and when perfectly dry, glazed with pure madder, which after two hundred years is as luminous as when first painted!

THE LONGHIS AND TIEPOLO

Pietro Longhi was born in Venice in 1702 and began his artistic career as a jeweler in his father's shop, to quote from one of the very interesting biographies that were published during the spring of 1911 in the able *Florence Herald*. He showed unusual talent and became the pupil of Antonio Balestra and afterwards of Giuseppe Maria Crespi. Several of his works are in the Academy at Venice, the most noted being "La Toilette," a lady at her dressing-table. The Palazzo Lafrèdo in Venice has a very much admired fresco by him which is known as "La Caduta dei Sigouli." Eleven portraits were attributed to his hand in this exhibition, some of them indeed of doubtful ascription.

His son Alessandro Longhi, born in Venice in 1733, was also represented by twelve works in the same room. He painted the portraits of many Venetian nobles of his day and was the author of a book "The Lives and Portraits of Famous Venetian Artists." His "The Young Girl with a Fan," dressed in light blue with bright auburn hair, might have come from the brush of Manet. Number 48 in Sale VII to X—"Young Lady Wearing a Three-cornered Hat" was of great charm and purely Venetian in sentiment and type. As a chronicler of the intimate life of Venice he is already well known by his extensive series of small pictures instinct with the very spirit of Goldoni's comedies.

Also in the loan collection one remarked a handsome work by Hyacinthe Rigaud who was born at Perpignan in 1659 and died in Paris in 1743. Although he was himself a Frenchman, the subject of his picture was the Marquis Philip Corsini. It has all the decorative amplitude of this master's work and recalls the French galleries in the Louvre and Versailles. Rigaud was the son and grandson of artists and began his career at the early age of eight when left an orphan, and it was through the kindness of friends that he received his art education. In 1682 he won the prize of the Fine Arts Academy and, following the advice of Le Brun, devoted himself to portraiture.

Gian Battista Lampi was born in the North of Italy in 1757 and died in Vienna in 1830. He came of a family of painters. Sixteen works, of which the finest was perhaps the portrait of Catherine II of Russia, belonging to the Winter Palace of Petrograd, were placed in the Salone di Cinquecento (see illustration, Fig. 5). A regal personage, well-ordered in composition and delicate in flesh and treatment of drapery.

The "Count Litta" (see illustration, Fig. 6) was a portrait of more dazzling brilliancy. I was able

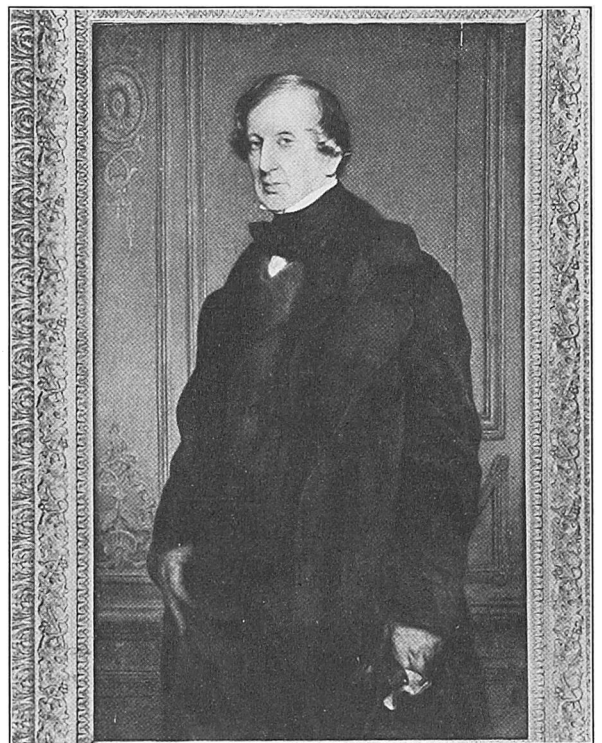


FIG. 7. "PRINCE OF CISTERNA"
BY PAUL DELAROCHE

to obtain but little record of this accomplished painter who, it appears, after his education went at once to Poland and spent the remainder of his life painting portraits in the North. Most of those shown were from the galleries of Krakau and Petrograd.

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo [Venice 1693—1770] of whom there were four works, was not essentially a portrait painter. He has, however, left the most joyous decorations on walls and ceilings in Venice, Milan, Würzburg and Madrid that it is possible to imagine. By his prodigious energy and great decorative skill he seems to bring to its close in a flood of glorious light and color the whole of the great art of Italy. He was in request with all of Europe, and his contemporaries as it were realized that the end was approaching and grasped eagerly at some example of his brush. Such portraits as he painted during his life-time are rather decorations, studies for dramatic effect; swept in with perhaps too free a brush to be accepted as concrete portrayal of individuality or the character of a definite person.

A NINETEENTH CENTURY VENETIAN

With Sir Thomas Lawrence we in America are very familiar, as some of his most beautiful works have come to us in the past thirty years. He, like Tiepolo in the dazzling close of Italian Art, may be considered the Swan Song of the great Eighteenth Century school of portraiture in England. All painters who appreciate virtuosity of technique find great delight in studying his work. I remember when a student in Paris my master Carolus-Duran, then at the zenith of his career, making a special trip to London to study the painting of a lady's hair by Lawrence, coming back the next day to continue work on a portrait where a similar problem of blue lights on black hair had to be solved. One example of Lawrence only was in the collection at the Palazzo Vecchio, that of the sculptor Canova from the museum of the Brera at Milan.

A further work which I deemed particularly deserving of notice in this particularized selection of paintings, purely from an artist's point of view, was Paul Delaroche's portrait of the Prince of Cisterna (see illustration, Fig. 7). The painter was a Frenchman born in Paris in 1797. In that we had an example of the Nineteenth Century. The influences of extreme severity brought in by the Revolution and emphasized in the canvases of David and Ingres were passing away, and the scholarly

romanticism which followed was evident. The head was modeled with delicate transparent color—though refined in character, perhaps rather thinly painted, but firm in drawing. The Louis Philippe plum-colored great coat is treated solidly with body color and the whole is stamped with the scholarly training of this very popular artist of the early thirties.

His contemporary Francesco Hayez, born in Venice 1791, died in Milan 1882, had no less than eight examples of his able brush. In the portrait "Teresa Borri Stampa, wife of A. Manzoni" belonging to the Brera Museum of Milan we had an analogous work in technique to the Delaroche alluded to above. It is quite possible that the two were painted about the same time. They show great similarity in treatment and demonstrate that the same influences were abroad in art both in Italy and France at the time. Hayez was the foremost painter of his day in Italy and his portrait is seen in the Uffizi gallery of artists' portraits of themselves. This particular work of a lady of early middle age, wearing a delicate white lace cap, black silk dress and crinoline, had all the refinement and internal charm of sentiment that could be desired. The left hand—dainty, limpid in color and beautifully drawn—was a marvel of exquisite workmanship. It reminded me very much of a portrait by Degas we saw some years ago in New York, of a lady wearing an old-fashioned bonnet.

We then came down to the most recent works which were portraits of Robert Browning and Mrs. Browning painted by the popular Florentine artist Gordigiani in the early sixties.

Taking the collection in its entirety, it demonstrated the various phases of the art movement in Italy during the period it covered far better than any museum; where as a rule works of art are gathered which have gained the greatest repute, irrespective of their sequence chronologically or their genuine artistic merits.

There are two kinds of collections of pictures; the one historical and documentary—the other purely artistic and technical; which latter is generally of the greater interest to the painter and art student. The collection in question no doubt belongs to the former class; but, following my own taste, I have chosen to treat it as of the latter and have selected for mention the works which would appeal the strongest to those of my profession.

Carroll Beckwith

